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ABSTRACT

A short review of the various "revolutions" in methodology which foreign language instruction has undergone since its inception as an area of study leads into an appraisal of the role of government and private foundations in the education of teachers. The four-point program of the Washington Fourth Draft plan for teacher education and certification illustrates essential concepts discussed in the paper. It includes principles related to: (1) the duration of teacher preparation, (2) the notion of individualized teacher preparation, (3) the role of schools and professional organizations in teacher training, and (4) performance criteria. (RL)

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THE ROLE OF "OUTSIDE" ORGANIZATIONS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

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The title of this paper was originally framed as a statement, but it might more properly be considered a question: "Is There a Role for 'Outside' Organizations in Foreign Language Teacher Education?". While I believe that organizations sponsored by the Federal government or the foundations do have a very necessary and positive role to play, I recognize that it is only a partial one, and that we need the efforts of other types of outside organizations to complement our own. I would like to talk about several recent developments in the state of Washington that hold great promise of accomplishing this, creating a four-pronged cooperative approach that I feel will be more comprehensive and effective than the present system.

The profession does need government and foundation-sponsored programs and projects to evaluate current methodology, to conduct applied research, and experiment with new concepts and practices. We have been through four methodological revolutions in the past century -- from grammar-translation through the direct and reading methods to the audio-lingual revolution that sparked us a decade ago. More are on the way. The current melding of our third-generation "traditional" texts and our second-generation audio-lingual ones symbolizes a fifth, and thankfully bloodless, revolution, and the advocates of bilingual and bicultural education are clamoring for a sixth. But while the fluidity of theory has allowed internal dynamism and growth in the profession, it has also created a general and occassionally frustrating uncertainty about what we want to teach, how we can teach it, and, ultimately, why we are teaching it at all.

As Chomsky and others have pointed out, no discipline, not even linguistics or educational psychology, can presently support an empirical theory of language learning or acquisition. We need such a theory, as well as working definitions of levels and possible goals of language proficiency and competency. We need to know more about the possible uses of buildings, classrooms, scheduling arrangements and equipment. We need to know more about the foreign language student, and how to satisfy his interests and motivations. And we need a better understanding of the teacher's role and behavior, and the possible levels and modes of interaction in a foreign language classroom. In short, we need empirically-derived theories and basic information if we are ever to construct a true or valid methodology.

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We need a scientific base, for we are presently approaching successful foreign language teaching as an art, and basing our curricula on educated guesses or pure hunches. On the one hand, this approach can downgrade teaching skill to a cult of the personality, for it is assumed that "good teachers are born, not made." This discourages many potential teachers from trying, and ultimately defeats many who do. And on the other hand, our teachers frequently find their training, no matter how good, has prepared them for curricula that are ineffective, irrelevant or simply bad.

Experimentation and research should be the roles that government and foundation-sponsored projects play, therefore, and we should apply our efforts toward questions basic to foreign language teaching. Such outside programs have a better chance to deal with these problems effectively, for they have more freedom of action, less committment to specific theories or deadlines, and generally more money and varied expertise on hand than is available to individual school districts, colleges or universities. Some organizations have already initiated studies along these lines, and, if the Washington Foreign Language Program is successful in obtaining funds for our current proposal, we plan to turn to many of these questions in a unique bilingual learning situation. But where does that leave us in the meantime?

In Washington, the cooperation of the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington Education Association, and various school districts and professional organizations has produced a new plan for teacher education and teacher certification. Informally called the Fourth Draft, the plan holds great promise of bettering our "art" of teaching, as well as our "art" of teaching teaching, by rooting them more firmly in both practical field situations and in a somewhat more behaviorist and manageable concept of teaching personality.

The plan takes the following principles as general guidelines:

(1) Professional preparation should continue throughout the career of the practitioner.

(2) Preparation and career development plans should be individualized.

(3) Schools and professional organizations, as well as colleges and universities, should be recognized as preparation agencies, and should take an active role in teacher education.

(4) Discussions about preparation should be based on performance criteria -- performance in relation to stated objectives and the world of the practitioner.

I'm sure none of us would disagree with the first two objectives, few would disagree with the third, and most can see the possible pitfalls

in the last. But I do not propose to offer specific criticisms or endorsements of the Fourth Draft here; I would prefer to speak about the concepts underlying the plan, and particularly the final and most controversial objective, that I hope will point foreign language teacher education in more productive directions.

Basic to the Fourth Draft is a definition of teaching as an identifiable set of behaviors that can be modified, cultivated or erased in any teacher given proper awareness and training. The plan therefore requires individual school districts and their cooperating agencies to set up "performance criteria" for the process of certification, and thus indirectly identify the behaviors that teachers are expected to perform. Although almost necessarily incomplete, interaction analyses and other products of educational psychology -- a discipline long since escaped from the "rat-trap" of stimulus-response theory -- can at least help in the identification of behaviors, as well as provide some useful focal points for a program of teacher education. Of course, "personality" does play an important and almost non-identifiable role in teaching, but the Fourth Draft reflects the fact that certain personality defects can be overcome and certain attributes enhanced by simple modifications of teaching behavior. In this sense, it charts a wider and more ambitious role for itself than most teacher certification plans, for it proposes to act in both a remedial and a prescriptive capacity.

Contrary to the well-intentioned fears of some, this approach does not exclude theoretical training, nor does it necessarily "mechanize" the teaching process. Indeed it must not, for it is generally evident today that the affective elements of learning have become at least as important as the cognitive ones, and that the strictly behaviorist method of describing human actions and thoughts is incomplete and therefore invalid. And the need for the larger perspective of the theoretical framework becomes very important in language learning and teaching, for we are dealing with one of the most complex and difficult of all human behaviors. Furthermore, we inevitably work with student attitudes in foreign languages, for we not only attempt to erase ethnocentrism, but also ask the student to drop his familiar American "group" self and assume a foreign one with the vocabulary range of a small child. Our goal, therefore, must be to help teachers become alert to their students' needs and responses, and aware of the structures underlying classroom procedures. But theory must relate to practice to accomplish our aim. We must teach toward the ideal, rather than about it, and we must help our trainees use and internalize theory through applied practice.

It should be noted that while the Fourth Draft calls for "performance criteria", it does not detail methodological criteria, nor does it impose any standards on school districts. The state thus encourages unofficially a concept that is a natural, exciting, and almost necessary implementation of the Fourth Draft's guiding principles, a concept that revolves around the very real need for applied practice.

This is the training complex, an idea currently under consideration in two Washington school districts, and already implemented else-

where in the nation. An ideal training complex is one that combines theoretical and practical aspects of teacher education in a field-centered, individualized, and task-oriented program, administered by the faculty of a college of education in cooperation with master teachers, school administrators, and professional personnel. Following the principles of the Fourth Draft, a complex should reflect the community it serves, and should invite the community to participate in planning and operations as soon as possible. Thus, through a network of such complexes or representational classroom situations, it would be possible to provide a trainee with real or simulated experiences under expert guidance to prepare him for many different types of situations in all types of schools. A complex should become the center for the development of training materials, and should possess videotape equipment, audio-visual equipment, a film and professional library, and other technical aids; this equipment should be used extensively to help establish a useful theoretical and emotional distance from the teaching situations demonstrated, as well as provide maximum flexibility of presentation and discussion. Theory should be applied to situations, rather than vice-versa, and a complex should seek to provide a trainee with a balance of theory and guided practice that enables him to form his own method of teaching and see it in perspective.

This could be done for instance, by exposing each foreign language teacher trainee to all levels of instruction from FLES through senior high under the partial supervision of a random or selected variety of master teachers. A teacher trainer from the college of education should take on the supervision of the trainee throughout the whole experience. In this way, the trainee would not only be able to choose from many different styles, levels and methods of instruction, but would also have the very necessary element of continuity in his training. And a complex should undertake to extend the training period, for the present one does not allow the trainee enough time to become comfortable in his unaccustomed role, confident enough to know what works for him, and receptive and knowledgeable enough to accept and utilize constructive criticism.

A training complex could conceivably develop the community's initial planning role into a meaningful form of school service, involving many people as resource teachers, para-professionals, aides or staff associates. Inter-action can lead to integration between the community and the school, a process that is in the best interest of both. And with the development of strong professional involvement and responsibility in the teacher-education programs, we can hope to see an even greater degree of early identification and recruitment of potential teachers -- including such innovative techniques as pupil/pupil tutoring situations, or senior high and advanced students helping with the elementary or primary classes. Over 50% of our teachers are teaching in the same schools or districts they attended as students; hopefully we could capitalize on this, and develop strong local centers of recruitment, training and meaningful interaction.

But these are hopes, and, in many cases, pipe-dreams acknowledged to be beyond present financial capabilities. The truly signifi-

cant difference in the concept of a training complex is that it provides varied settings for the individually supervised application of task-oriented theoretical training. The complex should not present a unified or uniform method of teaching, but use its flexibility and human and technical resources to help each trainee develop his own method of attaining the specified "performance criteria". In a sense, a complex should take teacher education out of the classroom, and give our trainees a chance to test, discover, use and internalize various techniques while their ideas and methods are still flexible.

Research, training and theory are not enough, however; the language departments of our universities must also participate in the effort to produce better foreign language teachers. Over seventy per cent of our foreign language majors go on to become foreign language teachers; we must serve their needs better by instituting comprehensive programs of intensive language study, linguistics, phonetics, and general culture either to replace or complement the current programs in literature. We must investigate and institute new types of advanced degree programs in foreign language and pedagogy to satisfy the need for language teachers in the two-year and community colleges. And with the advent of bilingual and bicultural education, we must arrange our language programs so that our future language teachers can attain the appropriate degrees of skill in more than one subject matter.

I am happy to report that changes in the directions I've outlined are either already under way or could be in the foreseeable future. The restructuring of the training experience and certification procedure will begin when the final form of the Fourth Draft is implemented. The development of more practical and applied research is already being initiated and encouraged nationwide as well as in the state. Two Washington school districts are presently setting up training complexes that look most promising, and many more districts are taking advantage of the new flexibility to set up training programs that reflect their own needs and the realities of teaching much more closely. And, finally, the new Master's Degree programs at Eastern Washington State College, the new Doctor of Arts program in Germanics and the proposed one in Romance at the University of Washington, and the recent initiatives toward coordinating the University language programs with those of the community colleges and high schools reflect the type of action being instituted by responsive language departments. Colleges of education, foreign language departments, school districts, professional organizations, and the state administrative agencies are working together to produce a more competent, more aware, and more confident language teacher. Avenues of communication are opening up, and responsibilities, needs, and possibilities are being made known. Organizations previously "outside" the teacher-training process are now participating within; the new breed of foreign language teacher can only be a better one for their cooperation.